

Hello. This is the entire email thread between Rebecca Lindenbach and a Love and Respect employee who answered a comment left on their website. Any comments made after the fact by Rebecca will be in red for complete clarity.

This is not meant to be a personal attack on Emmerson Eggerichs or any of his employees. This is merely meant to warn people about the kinds of teachings, advice, and counsel given through this website.



Rebecca Lindenbach <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>

Love & Respect Response

6 messages

Subject: Form Submission - Your Spouse's Weaknesses Call for Your Sympathy, Not Your Condemnation

Reply-To: [REDACTED]@gmail.com

Name: Rebecca Lindenbach

Email: [REDACTED]@gmail.com

Message: This article has an important message, but you need to add something about the difference between weakness, character flaws, and actual evil. You mention weakness and evil (adultery, abuse) but not the middle one. Unfortunately, many marriages are struggling because of character issues, which is not addressed here, and the response to that is different than the response to weakness.

If a husband is perpetually lazy, late, or speaks in a tone of voice that is unkind he needs to be called out and rebuked by his wife. If a husband is refusing to help with housework or is making extra work for his wife for no reason, that is a character flaw known as selfishness. She needs to be told, "You can call him to more," and my concern is that this article is telling her, "You need to be quiet and look to God for strength to deal with his weakness." That's not a healthy message to that woman--the distinction needs to be made because calling each other to more is part of being "equally yoked"--it's how we make each other stronger in marriage and grow more like Christ.

I think that the message that we shouldn't hold people to unreasonable standards and we need to recognize that weakness is not sin is a good one. But this article could easily make a spouse in a marriage with a person with serious character flaws unable to call out those issues. If you added something about how husbands and wives can both call out character flaws and need to challenge each other towards love and good deeds when we fall short, that would help balance this article further.

██████████ <██████████@loveandrespect.com>

Mon, Sep 23, 2019 at 9:33 AM

To: ██████████@gmail.com

Rebecca,

Thank you for emailing Love and Respect Ministries. We appreciate your thoughts.

What you consider character flaws and what another considers character flaws can be 2 different things. Some of what you are calling "flaws" are actually personal preferences. For example, you may prefer that your husband not be lazy. What you think is lazy another person may not. Is he on the couch all day, every day doing nothing (lazy or depressed or....) or is he on the couch at night after working hard all day (overworked, exhausted, stressed) and too tired to help around the house?

The principles of Love & Respect come into play in HOW you address these preferences. "Calling someone out" is a harsh confrontation, not a respectful one. If you want to see your husband's spirit soften toward you and allow God to move him to show you love in ways that are meaningful to you, then you need to make requests respectfully.

Think about what your husband would consider your character flaws. We all have them so be honest with yourself here. Now would you prefer he speak to you about his preferences in a loving tone or would you want him to "call you out and rebuke you" ?

Next, look at how you “calling him out” has worked for you in the past? I would think it hasn’t worked well or you wouldn’t be emailing us. Showing love or respect toward a spouse is no guarantee that things will change, but harsh tones (as you yourself mentioned above) will not work. Again, you can respectfully discuss these things with your husband. Use a soft tone, be mindful of your words and facial expressions. Many times, though, going quiet does work. This is not to make you a doormat. It is to make you realize that not everything needs to be “called out” that you think should.

Rebecca, I speak from personal experience here. I have personally lived this when my marriage was headed for divorce. I have been blessed to also see hundreds of women apply respect toward their husbands with amazing results. God moved! I was actually elevated to a place in my home that I used to fight for. My marriage and countless others have been restored by applying God’s Word.

God created us male and female. Not wrong just different. God’s way for us to treat the opposite sex works. Why? Because He knows how He created us. Ultimately this all comes down to how much you really trust God. He is calling you and me to do our part, do we really trust that God will do His part?

Ultimately, we can only change ourselves, so you do your part of Ephesians 5:33 and let God take care of the rest. Try it, you will never wonder, “What if I had done it God’s way.....?”

We hope this helps Rebecca!

With Love & Respect,



www.loveandrespect.com

Rebecca Lindenbach <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>

Mon, Sep 23, 2019 at 10:45 AM

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@loveandrespect.com>

Hello,

Thank you for your response.

Again, however, it is incredibly concerning that the only option given to women is to be silent and just bear with it, and it seems that you are unable to understand that rebuking can be done in a loving fashion. I believe that is one of the faults of Love and Respect at its core: it seems to think that if the message doesn't sound "nice," it is fine if it's disregarded by the husband.

Love and Respect seems very unwilling to identify character flaws or admit that husbands may have character flaws (but seems quite quick to note that wives have character flaws. You even pointed out MY flaws in this email, when this was not about me but about a theoretical situation with a sinning husband). And then, when women are told they can speak up about it, we're only allowed to do so in very specific ways in order to placate our sinning husbands. A husband should not be told he doesn't have to listen to the godly counsel of his wife if it doesn't come in the exact right packaging. I would also point you to Matthew 18 for how such behaviour should be dealt with. It never says that you should stay silent.

I personally actually am in an incredibly happy, healthy marriage but work with women who have been emotionally abused in marriages through our website.

One of the reasons my marriage is quite healthy and happy is that BOTH of us are able to call each other out on our actions that are not Christ-like. My husband and I have both done this and it is important since it is part of the refining process we are called to as Christians. You assume it hasn't worked well--my husband would be the first to disagree. He often gives examples of times when I called him out and it made him a better person, and I do the same. We both speak about it publicly to help couples understand that we are meant to call each other to more in Christ, not enable sinfulness and immaturity through silence.

On the flip side, many of the marriages we hear about on our website followed the Love and Respect protocol for years in an effort to change husbands with serious character flaws and it made them more selfish and even abusive as they were allowed to get away with treating their wives unlovingly. When the only response is "you do nothing and wait," we are disrupting the biblical principle of sowing and reaping. "God cannot be mocked--a man reaps what he sows." It is concerning that Love and Respect's protocol for women is so focused on ensuring that the

husband doesn't ever face the reality of his selfish, unloving actions. Instead, when the husband does something bad, the wife reaps the punishment.

Women who choose not to put up with sinful or immature behaviour do not trust God any less than women who decide to say silent and do nothing. But I would argue that in many cases women who call their husbands to become more, to grow in Christ, to go on towards love and good deeds are bringing God's kingdom to earth much more than when women are silent and allow for selfishness to go unchecked.

Finally, you seem to equate following Love and Respect with following God's word, when the entire book is based on only 1 verse in all of scripture. I would caution you to understand that the gospels and the epistles are much more encompassing than simply the one verse Love and Respect is based on with no context.

I encourage you to reconsider that people may only have an issue with Love and Respect because they are unhappy. I personally have a problem with it because it has been shown to enable abuse in many, many marriages. I highly recommend you read this in-depth statistical analysis of hundreds of stories of the readers of Love and Respect to understand where this concern is coming from. It is attached to this email.

I would suggest re-reading the email you sent me from the lens of a wife whose husband is (a) addicted to pornography and unrepentant, (b) refusing to find a job and is instead playing video games all day and financially harming the family as a result, or (c) verbally abusive to the wife or children in the family. I hope you are able to see how the advice you gave me would cause a great deal of damage and even potential danger for women in these situations.

■, my issue is not with you at all. Personally, my concern is that Emmerson Eggerichs is promoting a teaching that has been shown to be incredibly damaging to many, many marriages. Even if it works for some, it does not work for all and when it goes wrong, it goes very very wrong. I do not see any evidence that he has taken responsibility for this despite it being brought to his attention multiple times. In fact, I believe that this likely did change your marriage greatly and as a result, you simply didn't know how much this has harmed others and that is why you support it. However, let's remember that not all pregnant mothers who took thalidomide ended up with children with severe side effects. Just because it doesn't harm all doesn't mean it doesn't harm any and doesn't mean that it is safe.

If you would forward this email and the attached study to Emmerson, I would greatly appreciate that. My issue is not a personal one and if he were to recant the damaging teachings in his book I think that would have so much power for healing and restoration for so many. All I want is to see healthy marriages thrive and to see an end to women being subjected to abuse by these kinds of teachings.

Let's remember that making a mistake or being wrong doesn't make us "bad people"--but when we continuously ignore the damage our actions have done, that is when we cross the line into sin. My prayer is that The Love and Respect ministry begins to re-think how it has taught this one verse without taking the entire context of what it means to be a follower of Jesus into account. As well, I hope that Emmerson and the Love and Respect ministry begin to look at the research done into the effects of this book but also research done by psychologists Emmerson himself has touted as experts such as Gottman, who fundamentally disagrees with the premise of this book and has found it to be damaging, as well. We are not the only ones who have found this teaching to lead to harm.

Thank you again for your response, and have a great day
Rebecca Lindenbach

Note: I attached to this email the analysis of comments of 100s of women on the effects of Love and Respect on their marriages. At this point, she knew entirely who I was and who I worked with (although a quick google search at the beginning would have worked since I never hid my name from them). All further emails should be read with the understanding that this employee knows what we have written about them in the past and exactly who I am.

██████████ <██████████@loveandrespect.com>

Wed, Sep 25, 2019 at 11:50 AM

To: Rebecca Lindenbach <██@gmail.com>

Hi Rebecca,

I will pass this on to Dr. Emerson as you requested.

Your email did not say you were asking a hypothetical question, the way it was written seemed you were referring to your own marriage. We respond to hundreds of emails from wives whose husbands' have addictions, are in abusive relationships, refuse to work, and are having affairs. It is heartbreaking. Never once have we ever told someone to stay silent and live with the abuse. We instruct them to get out of harm's way, we tell them to respectfully confront the sin, not turn a blind eye to it. To ignore sin goes against the Word of God. We also tell them to seek

pastoral and/or Christian counseling. Again, respect does not mean staying quiet all the time, it means you can say what needs to be said but do so in a respectful manner.

Once again, she claims that we CAN confront respectfully but then fails to give any examples of what this would look like while still saying that what I was advocating for--a wife's ability to call out her husband's sin--is disrespectful and proof I am a disrespectful wife (later in this email).

Did you know that Dr. Emerson witnessed his dad attempt to strangle his mother? He understands abuse and preaches against it. His personal experience with an abusive father impacted him greatly. He gave an impactful message in the plenary session at AACC to thousands of professional counselors on the Wounded Healer, and a similar message to 12,000 students on the Wounded Healer at Liberty University. We invite you to watch it [here](#). Please do not assume he lacks empathy or promotes a message that motivates men, like his dad, to be abusive.

In case you are reading this, Emerson, I want to clearly state this to you: the fact that you witnessed abuse is horrific. But it should make you more, not less, sensitive to the accusations made against your book that you have enabled and encouraged abuse in hundreds of marriages. You being an abuse survivor does not mean that you are unable to harm others. I am sorry you experienced this, truly. But you need to stop the cycle now, and stop ignoring the cries of women who are suffering like your mother did--but this time by men fueled by your teachings.

Dr. Emerson does not highlight one verse. There are many, such as 1 Peter 3:1,2 where God reveals through the Apostle Peter to win a disobedient husband through respectful behavior. But he also highlights Acts 5 where Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit and to Peter. They both lost their lives as God disciplined them for lying to the Holy Spirit. Peter witnessed this. Peter did not say to Sapphira, "You get to live for being such a respectful wife who went along with your husband's sin." He also highlights mutual submission in Ephesians 5:21.

Dr. Emerson has written 850 blogs, 12 books revolving around this topic, done 125 podcasts with nearly 3 million downloads, etc. To tell him to say something that he has repeatedly said about getting out of harm's way, that men (and women) can use Scripture like Satan used Scripture against Jesus, and talked about his dad's own abuse, is to conveniently mislead people about the plethora of teaching to the contrary.

Of course, for some women to fixate on the fact that men are abusive is to state the obvious. The question is simple: Is the teachings of Paul in Ephesians 5:33 (the summary of the greatest treaties on marriage in the New Testament) and 1 Peter 3:1,2 a revelation from God that fosters

abuse and therefore needs to be unquoted? We can't remove scriptures because we don't like them or fear them.

The issue has never been about respecting evil behavior but respectfully confronting it, like Hosea loved a woman who was an adulterous. Hosea did not endorse Gomer's adultery but was a loving man in spite of it. The respect message in Scripture is about who God calls a woman to be, not about who her husband fails to be. And at the end of the day there is no promise about a husband changing.

Those who superficially read Love and Respect never get to chapters 23,24 on the Rewarded Cycle. This is about loving and respecting unto Christ regardless of what happens in the spouse. God commands a husband to love regardless of his wife being lovable or respectful. Those who believe respect means for a wife to be "nice" and a doormat simply refuse to read the repeated explanations against that.

So, is the answer for a woman to be filled with contempt (disrespectful)? The answer is that God calls us to be a woman of dignity and respect as we confront issues like Ananias lying to the Holy Spirit. Where a husband crosses the line, she must not join him. Yet, we should not rebuke our husbands in a way that feels contemptuous to him as a human being.

Again, I need to point out that she claims there are repeated explanations that respect doesn't mean not standing up to your husband. But we have scoured blogs and his book and can find no such example but have found countless examples of the contrary (a wife standing up was disrespectful, sharing her feelings was disrespectful, etc.)

People hear the pain in the lives of others who say, "I tried that respect thing and my husband abused me in even worse ways." The culprit must be the teaching. But we can say the same for boundaries, sexperts, or those who espouse rebuking a spouse. I can also say from experience leading women's groups for over 15 years, that some women think they are trying the "respect thing" but they refuse to respectfully confront the sin of their husband. They choose to remain living with an abusive or toxic husband. Why? Because it is easier than facing an unknown, financial burdens, they fear what others will think or they don't want to "disrupt the children" (who are already being negatively impacted). So, is this the fault of "bad teaching" or poor/improper application of the teaching? To say they "tried" makes them feel better and look better, but if you dig deeper you may discover it's not God's Word perpetuating the problem.

NOTE HERE: Love&Respect's argument flows like this: 1-people are abused because they do not follow Eggerichs' book properly. 2-people claim it is bad teaching. 3-In reality, it's not God's

Word perpetuating the problem. At this point, God's Word and Eggerichs' opinions are being used interchangeably, which is appalling to say the least.

Rebecca, I am a very strong-willed, independent, "tell it like it is" female. If I can be very honest there are times when I said and did things toward my husband that were not Christ like in my effort to make him more like Christ! Have I said strong things to him, YES! I just asked my husband if I, a leader who teaches women how to show respect, was a doormat who didn't share my thoughts on how he acts at times. He laughed, a doormat I am not! But we, as Christ followers, must know the heart behind our "rebuke". What is the spirit behind the rebuke? It matters. We don't get godly results by ungodly ways.

May I ask you to try what I have the ladies in my groups do? Ask your husband if you have ever come across disrespectfully when you confronted him about something. Tell him to be completely honest with you. I understand you have a wonderful marriage, as do I now, but we are all human. None of us do this perfectly all the time.

If your husband says yes you have, can you please have him email Dr. Emerson to tell him how he, as a man, handles being rebuked/confronted by someone who displays contempt/disrespect? This would be helpful for us to know. It is possible that a husband who can do this is actually honoring his part in Ephesians 5:33, responding in love regardless of his wife's disrespectful rebuke/confrontation. Again, this does not mean we wives can't ever say anything, it means we need to be mindful of how we say things.

If he says that you do and he responds positively to a disrespectful confrontation, he is extraordinary. We truly want to learn from him. Let us insert, we are not talking about those moments when we all get a bit nasty. We give grace here. But when it comes to this core idea that you are advocating, do you rebuke with a spirit of disdain and disgust? Truth carries its own weight and thus we speak the truth in a loving and respectful way as best we can. What a spouse does with that is up to the spouse. If a spouse counters with abuse, do we conclude, "Well, we need to rebuke back with contempt and hostility to prevent abuse?" That becomes a vicious and hostile cycle that doesn't honor God.

Rebecca, we request that this conversation be between the two of us and not to be published on social media until we both can clarify our intent during this exchange of emails. That, to us,

would be a loving and respectful thing to do. We are assuming this conversation is done in good faith.

Have a blessed day!

With Love & Respect,

██████████

www.loveandrespect.com

Rebecca Lindenbach <██████████@gmail.com> Wed, Sep 25, 2019 at 2:05 PM

To: ██████████ <██████@loveandrespect.com>

Thank you very much for passing this on to Emmerson, ██████! I appreciate that greatly.

You say I am assuming things about Emmerson. No, I am not. I assume nothing about Emmerson. I am merely reporting to you the hundreds of stories we have heard from women damaged by Love and Respect. If people say that they have been hurt, broken, abused, and mistreated by a teaching it is the responsibility of the teacher to reevaluate his teaching. If Eggerichs does not intend to promote abusive tactics, then he should be humble in his response and instead of doubling-down on his teachings and trying to convince others *who are telling them they have been mistreated due to his teachings* that his teachings are not the issue, he should re-evaluate his teachings and ask for the perspective of abuse advocates, abuse victims, and experts in the field who disagree with him to see where he may have erred. That is what is responsible in this situation because it will ensure he is able to see his work from a new perspective, rather than asking only for opinions of people who agree with him.

I recognize that you say the book says women should not put up with abuse. But there are examples of what is obviously abuse, even if Emmerson does not explicitly name it, where the woman DOES stay with her abusive husband and is praised for it. That is dangerous, and

Emmerson has never apologized for those anecdotes or retracted them when called out. Whether or not Emmerson wants to admit it, the message of his book has caused harm to many vulnerable marriages. He may not intend for it, but that is what is happening. And our intentions mean nothing if we do not change our actions in the face of extreme suffering we have caused, even if unintentionally.

If Emmerson looks at the research, the stories, the pain, the hurt, and truly hears the voices who are crying out saying that they have suffered and is still determined to stick by Love and Respect, that is his choice. But understand that our good intentions do not make us blameless when we unintentionally do wrong--I can intend to not hit someone with a car, but if I didn't see the cyclist and hit the cyclist with my car I am still at fault.

The reason I am not addressing any of the specific rebuttals you have presented is that the issue here is not what Emmerson believes, or what you believe, or even what you believe the book believes. It's about the fact that people are hurting and continuously being harmed, and Eggerichs does nothing about the teachings in his book. You can say that it's the fault of the reader, but other books are not causing this harm. And even if it is the fault of the reader, then it is incumbent on the author to mitigate that risk as much as possible, which he continuously refuses to do by not recalling the book. He can write all the blog posts he wants, but as long as that book is still in circulation he is responsible since he has been warned of the harm it brings.

The book Love and Respect, regardless of Emmerson's intentions, has damaging teachings within it. Here are some blog posts that break down some of these harmful messages:

- <https://tolovehonorandvacuum.com/2019/01/love-and-respect-review-how-sex-portrayed/>
- <https://tolovehonorandvacuum.com/2019/01/love-and-respect-why-unconditional-respect-cant-work/>
- <https://tolovehonorandvacuum.com/2019/01/the-ultimate-flaw-in-love-and-respect-eggerichs/>

In terms of your response to me personally, you are still conflating confrontation with disrespect. In Love and Respect, Eggerichs gives an example of how a wife can handle a workaholic husband which consists of saying 2-3 sentences and then being quiet for 10 to 20 days. This is not healthy and this is not real confrontation. And yet, both he and you seem to be assuming that doing anything beyond this is disrespectful. This is ignoring Matthew 18 and is toxic marriage advice.

It is incredibly inappropriate to ask for my husband's opinion on how he deals with my disrespect as it assumes I am unable to be a reliable narrator of my own story. My husband, who read this email himself, was also offended on my behalf as any emotionally healthy man should be. The theme of not trusting women to narrate their own stories is evident throughout Love and Respect's publications, specifically in [this blog post](#) which was discussed [in this podcast](#).

In fact, when my husband read what you said to me, his response was this: "Even if my wife were to be disrespectful, I am not so fragile that I couldn't handle that and I would still listen. I am not so fragile that I would fall apart at a bit of disrespect if there were a valid message beneath it. And I don't consider disagreement or confrontation--even heated ones--as disrespectful." He is far more focused on truth than he is on my tone of voice because, as an emotionally healthy man, he cares about becoming more like Christ more than he cares about having his ego stroked. He understands that we all need to be open to being humbled--and that needed humbling sometimes doesn't come in fluffy, soft messages. This is exactly the same way I feel about him confronting me, because both of us are approaching marriage from an emotionally healthy perspective.

You also say that he is extraordinary for being able to take criticism, even if it's disrespectful. I find that incredibly concerning, since the majority of men I know in and outside of the church are expected to be able to listen to women even if the message doesn't come in pretty packaging. That's just the measure of emotional maturity. May I suggest that perhaps my husband is not extraordinary in this way, but that the Love and Respect community rather is over-saturated with emotionally unhealthy men? Because I can assure you, this ability to listen even when someone is "disrespectful" is not abnormal, and most people do not label disagreement or confrontation as disrespect. They label it as simply what it is--disagreement and confrontation.

Regarding keeping this offline, as I have said before I have absolutely no issue with you personally, and have no intention whatsoever of drawing you into anything. However, as Love and Respect offers marriage advice to women in vulnerable situations, it is important that people are aware of the messages being given to people seeking help.

I did nothing to entrap or mislead in any way--nothing in my original email was misleading or gave any impression I was seeking personal advice. I was simply giving feedback on a post and wasn't even expecting a response. Because I work on a website that has been critical of Eggerichs' work, I thought it important to reach out personally with my concerns whenever possible. That was my intention, I was not expecting to have this conversation at all, actually.

If you believe that the messages you gave me are true, there is no reason for you to be uncomfortable with it going public. If you believe it is harmful, then people need to be warned that they are receiving harmful information from Love and Respect. If you would have given me different advice if you knew this would go public, that is a whole other issue that is incredibly concerning considering it implies that you agree that something that you said is harmful and are ashamed of having it go public but were OK with it being said in private.

If we decide to take these emails public, I will do my best to ensure 100% anonymity for you personally. However, as Love and Respect is a public website that is offering advice to people, people have the right to know if the advice given is safe. In counselling situations, anonymity is a right for the client, not the counselor because it is the person seeking help who is vulnerable, not the one in the power position.

I truly hope that you take time to honestly consider that Eggerichs might not be entirely right here. I urge you to please read the above posts and listen to the podcast I linked to as well. Send them to Emerson, and take time to really read the heartbreaking stories in that report I sent you. Picture their faces, picture the pain, and pray and ask Jesus to show you his heart for these broken people. And please, ask yourself if defending one man's teaching is worth all of those women's suffering.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Lindenbach

██████████ <██████████@loveandrespect.com>

Wed, Sep 25, 2019 at 9:07 PM

To: Rebecca Lindenbach <██████████@gmail.com>

Hi Rebecca,

I will respond to your other points later, but I want to address this part right away.

You misrepresented what we meant by not going public. We wanted to give you time and ourselves time to make sure that we clearly understood what the other person meant. Dr. Emerson wrote a whole book on that called: *Before You Hit Send*. Its purpose is for people to avoid assumptions like you made. It's very important that we don't misrepresent another person, so we need to ask for clarification to find out what someone meant by what they said if there was some confusion. We believe that's an appropriate way to go before we do something publicly. For you to twist the words around now to mean that somehow, we have something to hide is inappropriate. And this makes our point. We did not mean what you say we meant. We have no fear of going public, but we wouldn't want to say something that you did not mean and we misunderstood. We believe that's an act of grace toward people.

In the book *Before You Hit Send*, Dr. Emerson continues to talk about not presuming you know what another person means. You violated this principle telling us what we meant by what we said. We did not mean that.

We are not fearful of public information. After 850 blogs why would you say that? We are simply saying that it is only fair to give a person the opportunity to clarify, if we are unclear to them, in this kind of email exchange. You were and still are very unclear about what we were saying. As the Word of God says, *“Through presumption comes nothing but strife” (Proverbs 13:10 NASB 77.)*

With Love & Respect,

[REDACTED]

Rebecca Lindenbach <[REDACTED]@gmail.com> Wed, Oct 2, 2019 at 10:44 AM

To: [REDACTED]

Good morning,

When I originally emailed in it was simply to bring to Love and Respect's attention some potential issues with Emmerson's article. In fact, I actually commented on that particular article because I thought it was closer to the mark than other articles I had seen from him in the past and thought that he may actually take my criticisms into account.

If we decide to take this public, it will not be to misrepresent you. It will be literally to post verbatim what was sent from Love and Respect. We would simply show everything that was said in context.

Our issue is that we believe, and have data to show, that Love and Respect's teaching is dangerous. We deal with hurting marriages every day, and we know that Jesus does not want sin enabled nor does he want women dominated in His name.

We may have different opinions here, but we are talking about real lives being hurt. Throughout these emails, it has consistently seemed that the focus from Love and Respect is on defending Love and Respect more than on asking, "Have we contributed to the wrong, and how can we help the women who are hurting?"

If you feel the need to clarify anything that was said, feel free to send me edits, but it will be made clear that the edits were sent after the knowledge that the emails may go public.

Again, my hope and prayer for this is that marriages are places that are safe and edifying to both members and to Christ. If Eggerichs ever would like to discuss the harm we have found his teachings to have, we would be happy to have a conversation with him.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Lindenbach

A note about taking this public and my experience with Love and Respect:

I honestly did not think this was going to go anywhere, and didn't intend for it. This was me trying to simply let Eggerichs know our concerns personally. I believe that false teaching needs to be called out in a public way since the teaching was done in public (and there is biblical examples of just that), but I also wanted to go to him personally if possible (even though there was no personal grievance) because many people were asking us to and I thought "Hey, it won't hurt anything and it may be a better way to get him to listen to the fact that he is hurting people".

I tried to comment on his blog post. There was no way to do that, but there was a submission box. So I sent that original message expecting it to go nowhere (we get comments with constructive criticism all the time on the blog and we sometimes respond, sometimes don't, but we always read them so I figured it was the best way to do so).

So I was incredibly surprised when I got a message with marriage advice from someone I had never met, and from whom I did not ask for advice. I read and re-read my original comment many times to ensure that I really had not misled them but I do not think I could have written that in any way that was less personal. If the team was misled it was not due to my actions.

After my first response to this employee, however, they had full knowledge who I was and who I worked for. Any response after this point was in full knowledge of all of this. They could have ignored me, but they kept responding. I continuously tried again and again to get them to even acknowledge the hundreds of women who were hurting and they kept their hearts closed off--blaming the women for staying in bad relationships, saying they just didn't do it right, and dismissing them entirely since, as Emerson was an abuse victim himself, he couldn't possibly promote abusive tactics in his book.

By the time they said they didn't want this made public, they had already engaged with me knowing who I was. If this had been a personal communication where they had reached out to me to debate, I would not have taken it public. But here is why I believe it is important to make this public:

1. They, as this employee said, have hundreds of comments from women writing to them through the blog asking for advice. People need to be warned if this is the kind of advice given through this website.
2. Confidentiality is a client's privilege, not a counsellor's. They are not even licensed counsellors, so they should have even less expectation of privacy. If you went to a counsellor for anxiety and they said "You should drink bleach for your anxiety," the right response would be to do a google review of their business and say "Umm, this person told me to drink bleach for my anxiety. They are not safe." That is what is the right thing to do so you can prevent others from getting damaging and dangerous advice.
3. This shows once again that the image of Love and Respect is more important than addressing the cries of the abused and the hurt. She made many claims that women are encouraged to speak up throughout Love and Respect, but we have found absolutely zero real evidence of this as any statement of "you do not need to enable sin" is followed by examples of women doing exactly that and being praised as being good, respectful wives.

The last email I received is the one above, back in September. I gave them over 3 months to submit any clarifications, but they did not respond, so we must assume that they are happy with the content here.

My takeaways with engaging with the Love and Respect blog are as follows:

1. They inherently misunderstand intent and action. Because Emerson's intentions are good, his actions must be good. This is simply factually wrong.
2. To Love and Respect, abused women are an inconvenience to be ignored, not treasured sisters of Christ to be comforted. There was not a single "I am so sorry for the pain that those women are experiencing" or "I apologize for any way they feel that our materials harmed them or their marriages." Not once was their pain acknowledged except to blame them for remaining in abusive marriages (and completely ignoring the fact that many of them name teachings in Eggerichs' book as one of the reasons they stayed for longer than they should have). Not even after I gave them chance to make a public statement did they come back with compassion.
3. Love and Respect conflates Eggerichs' take on scripture with the Word of God itself. None of us are infallible, and this conflation means that it is impossible for Eggerichs to ever actually recant what he has said. Much like a cult leader, his ideas are worshipped as Scripture and questioning Emerson means you are questioning God.

At the end of this all I was emotionally exhausted (granted, I was 38 weeks pregnant while this was happening). It is depressing and discouraging to see people who claim Christ act with such blatant disregard for their fellow human beings in favour of ideology and rules.

And so I am left with these conflicting feelings of intense isolation when I think of the fact that so many large Christian outlets have hardened their hearts against the stories of those abused in favour of one charismatic man with toxic teachings. But at the same time I feel closer to God

than ever before. I find that when there are harmful things and people around you, telling you mixed messages about who God is, sorting out the wheat from the chaff is exhausting but leaves you with a much more clear picture of Christ and what it truly means to follow him.

I'm not saying I have everything right. But I can rest easy knowing that I am doing my best to stand up for those who have been mistreated and abandoned. And I hope God convicts those who lack the compassion to see that "they tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them." (Matt 23:4).